

THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE.  
(ESTABLISHED 1877.)

"TO CARE FOR HIM WHO HAS BORN THE BATTLE, AND FOR HIS WIDOW AND ORPHAN."—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

"THE VALIDITY OF THE PUBLIC DEBT OF THE UNITED STATES, AUTHORIZED BY LAW, INCLUDING DEBTS INCURRED FOR PAYMENT OF PENSIONS AND BOUNTIES FOR SERVICES IN SUPPRESSING REBELLION OR REBELLION, SHALL NOT BE QUESTIONED."—SEC. 4, ART. XIV, CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

"I CONSIDER IT THE HOLIEST PAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE SOLDIER PUBLISHED IN THE COUNTRY. I EARNESTLY COMMEND IT TO ALL CONSIDERERS OF THE COUNTRY."—PAUL VANDERVOORT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, G. A. R.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

One Dollar per Year.

"TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.—INvariably cash in advance. Money forwarded otherwise than by REGISTERED LETTER, POSTAL MONEY ORDER, OR DRAFT ON NEW YORK, WILL BE AT THE RISK OF THE SENDER, AND ALSO ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS PAID TO AGENTS.

"RENEWALS.—SUBSCRIBERS CAN ALWAYS ASCERTAIN THE DATE WHEN THEIR SUBSCRIPTION WILL EXPIRE BY LOOKING AT THE NUMBER ON THE WRAPPER OF THEIR PAPER, WHICH IS THE SAME AS THAT OF THE "VOICE NUMBER" OF THE LAST ISSUE WHICH THEY ARE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE.

"ADDRESSES.—ADDRESSES WILL BE CHANGED AS OFTEN AS DESIRED, BUT SUBSCRIBERS SHOULD IN ALL CASES GIVE THEIR OLD AS WELL AS NEW ADDRESS.

"CORRESPONDENCE.—CORRESPONDENTS ARE SOLICITED FROM EVERY SECTION IN REGARD TO ALL GRAND ARMY, PENSION, MILITARY, AGRICULTURAL, INDUSTRIAL AND HOUSEHOLD MATTERS, AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR WILL ALWAYS RECEIVE PROMPT ATTENTION. WRITE ON ONE SIDE OF THE PAPER ONLY.

"ADVERTISING RATES.—(PER ADVERTISING LINE) 10 CTS.; THREE LINES 25 CTS. OTHER TRANSLANT ADVERTISING, 20 CENTS PER LINE. THIRTEEN INSERTIONS 10 PER CENT. DISCOUNT; TWENTY-SIX INSERTIONS 20 PER CENT. DISCOUNT; FIFTY-TWO INSERTIONS 30 PER CENT. DISCOUNT. ADDRESS ALL LETTERS TO THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE.

615 FIFTEENTH ST., WASHINGTON, D. C.

ENTERED AT THE WASHINGTON POST-OFFICE AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER.

## THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE.

WASHINGTON, D. C., FEBRUARY 22, 1883.

The number of subscriptions to THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE received during the week ending Tuesday, February 20th, was 1,131.

The number of pension certificates issued and signed during the week ending February 20th, was as follows: Original, 718; increase, 162; re-issue, 41; restoration, 10; duplicate, 37; arrears, 0; accrued pensions, 64; total, 1,022.

In another column will be found, as usual, numerous extracts from the letters of our subscribers concerning a variety of subjects. The publication of these letters has incidentally served a novel purpose in furnishing our veterans with the addresses of old comrades of whose whereabouts they had lost all trace, and thus bringing about many pleasant reunions. Indeed, the circulation of THE TRIBUNE is now so large that the insertion of an advertisement in its columns calling for the address of a member of some particular regiment or company is pretty sure to elicit a prompt response, and applicants for pensions who need the evidence of old soldiers to perfect their claims have found THE TRIBUNE the quickest and most certain medium of communicating with them. In this way THE TRIBUNE has been of unexpected assistance to many a worthy claimant who, but for its aid, must have failed to establish his right to a pension.

The attention of our readers is once more directed to the list of premiums which appears in another column. These premiums after a six months' trial, have been found to fully meet the wants of our club raisers, and we are in receipt of a large number of testimonials to their value. Some of our comrades have selected books and pictures as premiums, and with them started Post libraries and adorned the walls of their Post rooms. The series of books entitled "Campaigns of the Civil War" has met with special favor, and justly so, since the price per volume is exceedingly low, while the works themselves rank with the best military histories of the day. For general reading, however, the "Capture of a Locomotive" is unquestionably the most interesting. Indeed, it is the most exciting and thrilling narrative of military adventure that has yet been written, and it deserves a place in the library of every ex-soldier. We are aware that our readers, as a rule, are prompted to canvass for THE TRIBUNE by the simple desire to enlarge the field of its usefulness, but they will find that the premiums which we offer for new clubs will in themselves amply repay them for the trouble.

ELSEWHERE in our columns, this week, will be found a copy of a letter addressed to the New York Tribune by one of its subscribers—giving notice of his intention to discontinue his subscription on account of its attacks on pensioners—together with the Tribune's reply. The latter, as was to be expected, is decidedly evasive, and, as the recipient himself says, in a letter inclosing it for our perusal, altogether unsatisfactory. The fact is, that the New York Tribune is trying to carry water on both shoulders. It pretends to be in favor of pensioning deserving claimants, yet persistently labors to convince the public that the pension system itself is honeycombed with fraud. It professes a great respect for disabled veterans, yet claims for a public exhibition of their names, wounds, and pension certificates as if they were a gang of forgers or swindlers. It will not do—the inconsistency is too obvious. Neither the New York Tribune nor any other newspaper that charges general and indiscriminate fraud upon our pensioners, without any legal or credible proof of the same, can by any stretch of the imagination be considered a friend of the soldier, and explanations, unaccompanied by retractions, are simply calculated to heighten the contempt which every honorable man must feel for the author of a wanton and malicious slander. Nevertheless, we are compelled to note that the New York Tribune is in a conscience left—even if it is true that our ex-

soldiers have found out by experience a certain method of enforcing their claims upon the attention of the journals which have raised such a hue and cry against them, we trust they will not be slow to avail themselves of it.

## The Tribune and Its Readers.

THE TRIBUNE appears this week enlarged from forty-eight to fifty-six columns and printed from its new Scott rotary press, built expressly for its use, at a cost of \$17,500, by the manufacturers, C. Potter, Jr., & Co., of New York, and capable of turning out twelve thousand perfect copies of THE TRIBUNE—cut, pasted and folded—per hour. The modern printing machine, as our readers are doubtless aware, is one of the most delicate and intricate pieces of mechanism ever devised by human ingenuity, and such accuracy and precision are requisite in the adjustment of its parts that perfection is seldom attainable at the first trial of its powers. As the practiced reinsman gives his thoroughbred a turn or two around the track to quicken his blood and ease his muscles before speeding him on the course, so it seems necessary that this creature of man's subtlest invention should be put through a sort of preliminary canter before she settles down to her natural gait. If, therefore, the present number of THE TRIBUNE should not present the handsome appearance that we trust it will, our readers will understand that it is simply because the new set which we have harnessed has not yet fairly settled down to work. We could wish that they were all at hand to see the wheels begin to turn and that gleaming band of snow-white paper, dexterously uncoiling itself from the monstrous roll, flash like a line of white between the whirling cylinders and cut in twain with a stroke of the knife, as swift and imperceptible as a fairy's touch, turn and bend and double on itself, until, in the twinkling of an eye, it escapes from the maze of tapes and lies fluttering and glistening on the table, a new-made newspaper. And now the yawning mail-bag receives it and it goes spinning across the continent, until at last it reaches the kindly hands that are waiting to receive it. It is no longer an inanimate band of white paper. Endowed with life and intelligence, it becomes, by a transmutation of elements more subtle than that of water into wine, a part of thought itself and a mainspring of human action—a force at once imperceptible and irresistible.

But the power of the press needs no ex-emplification at our hands. Its responsibilities are co-equal with its influence, and if the editor of THE TRIBUNE views with satisfaction the steady growth of its circulation, it is because he feels that he has not been insensible to the weight of these responsibilities nor faithless in the discharge of them. THE TRIBUNE from having been a modest monthly of limited circulation has grown to be one of the leading weekly newspapers of the age. There is no State or Territory in which it does not circulate, and it is a welcome visitor at nearly eleven thousand post-offices. Its principles alone remain unchanged; its purpose unaltered. "To care for him who has borne the battle and for his widow and orphan," is a trust which it will lay down only with the removal of the occasion for it, and so long as a single veteran is left to deplore the ingratitude of the Government in whose defense he risked his life, so long the voice of THE TRIBUNE will be heard above the hue and cry of his enemies, entreating and demanding justice.

And now, comrades, we leave you to your own reflections. If there is in THE TRIBUNE the stuff of which great leaders of opinion are made, shall we not have your earnest and unflinching support? Shall we not have the honor of commanding an invincible army of one hundred thousand subscribers, before whom the barriers of wrong and injustice which now environ Congress will crumble, like the walls of Jericho at the sounding of the trumpet, in ruins to the ground?

## Washington's Birthday.

The anniversary of the birth of Washington will doubtless be celebrated throughout the country to-day with the usual festivities. The holiday has ceased to have any special characteristics, but it is, nevertheless, observed with a certain degree of decorum, and is made the occasion for numerous social and patriotic gatherings. The contemplation of the virtues of him who was "first in peace, first in war, and first in the hearts of his countrymen" no longer stirs popular enthusiasm, yet it does not follow that the Nation is any the less sensible of their magnitude. This is a very busy and very practical age, and Americans, of all people, are the least given to hero worship. They accept the greatness of Washington as a fact of history, and do not concern themselves any further about it. Given a new occasion, and their patriotic impulses would probably be as deeply stirred as those of their most illustrious ancestors, but they have outgrown their fondness for the spread-eagle oratory which flourished in the Republic's younger days, and are content to know that this is "a great and glorious country," without wasting any powder or fireworks over the fact.

Then, too, the events of the Revolution, momentous as they were, seem tame and trifling when compared with those of the Rebellion. The sufferings of the Continental army at Valley Forge pale into insignificance when one thinks of the sacrifices which the soldiers of the present age were compelled to make in the war for the preservation of the Union, and one scans the history of that seven years' struggle in vain for any parallel to Andersonville. For every hero of revolutionary days our civil war produced a hundred every whit as deserving of remembrance, and the fame of their exploits is fresher and more vivid.

It is no longer necessary to go back to the

days of King George to find examples of patriotism, and it is but natural, therefore, that public gratitude should dwell more affectionately on the memory of those who saved the Republic than those who created it. And could Washington's voice speak to us to-day, we are sure it would not be in reproachful accents, but in earnest entreaty that we should continue to cherish the memory of the preservers of the Republic as our forefathers did the fame of its founders—to invoke for the feeble and crippled survivors of the struggle, not simply the justice, but the bounty of the Nation, and to visit the ingrates who would deny them both with a withering curse.

## How the Account Stands.

The cost of pensions is a favorite theme with the enemies of the soldier, and they are not at all particular about sticking to the official figures. Indeed, their statements vary so widely as to suggest the possibility that they have never taken the trouble to ascertain what the actual cost is. One journal puts the annual cost at \$100,000,000, another at \$150,000,000, and occasionally it happens that an editor's imagination runs away with him to such an extent that he gravely advises the Government to turn over the Treasury itself to the pensioners as a measure of economy. The extracts which we have published from time to time in THE TRIBUNE have served to familiarize our readers with the loose and frequently absurd statements employed by unscrupulous newspapers to sustain their arguments against the justice of pension legislation, and it is unnecessary to dwell upon the subject in this connection; but does it not seem curious, to say the least, that these journals should have nothing whatever to say concerning the expenditures of the Government on account of the public debt? The debt to the bondholder is certainly not more sacred than that to the soldier—the validity of neither can be questioned—yet the payments on the former have been enormous as compared with those on the latter, as the following statement, compiled from the official figures, conclusively shows:

Total public debt August 31, 1882,	\$2,756,431,571 43
Less cash in Treasury,	1,675,023,474 25
Total public debt July 1, 1882,	1,081,408,100 18
Paid to bondholders on account of interest on bonds to July 1, 1882,	2,182,643,538 32
Paid to bondholders on account of principal on bonds to July 1, 1882,	3,294,051,638 50
Total amount paid for pensions since the commencement of the war, 1861-1882,	387,427,694 43
Excess of amount paid to bondholders on account of public debt and interest over amount paid on account of pensions,	\$6,765,623,944 07

In other words, for every dollar paid the soldier, the bondholder has received five. Now, we do not begrudge the bondholder the money to which he is entitled under his contract with the Government; on the contrary, we believe he should be paid to the last dollar of principal and interest. But it is only fair that the newspapers which are prating about the cost of pensions and endeavoring to prejudice public sentiment against the payment of the Government's debt to its ex-soldiers, should let the public see the other side of the balance sheet.

## A Part of the War Debt.

Enough nonsense has been written and spoken about the pending Equalization of Bounties bill to fill a volume of the Congressional Record. It has been denounced as a mere device of the claim agents to plunder the Treasury, a job to give gratuity to every ex-soldier, another river and harbor steal, &c., &c., whereas, in point of fact, it is simply a measure to make good the promises of the Government of the United States to its volunteer soldiers, given at a time when it had the most urgent need of their services, and accepted by them in perfect confidence that they would be kept. It does not create any new obligation; its sole object is to discharge one of long-standing. Under it the soldier will not receive any increase of bounty, but simply the balance of that already due him. That is to say, he will be entitled to eight and one-third dollars per month, for each month of actual service, less the amount of United States bounty heretofore paid him. It does not entitle him to bounty for the period for which he has already been paid.

As a matter of fact there are some thousands of soldiers who received no bounty at all—through no fault of their own—although equally deserving with those who were paid in full, and there are others who received but a moiety of that justly due them. It is to equalize these differences, to repair the injustice resulting from the workings of the bounty laws, that the proposed bill has been so long urged in Congress. Once, as our readers know, it received the concurrent approval of both Houses and was submitted to the President—General Grant—for his signature, but the latter, alleging the poverty of the Treasury as the reason, saw fit to exercise the right of veto. That reason exists no longer, since the annual surplus of receipts over expenditures amounts to nearly \$150,000,000, and the time has come, in our judgment, when the measure should again receive the attention of Congress. It is too late, of course, to expect anything of the present body, but the incoming Congress should give it early and earnest consideration. The principles which it involves have been repeatedly discussed and their equity has so often been affirmed that our Senators and Representatives cannot plead ignorance of the merits of the measure as an excuse for delaying action, and they will sadly fail in their duty to the country if they neglect to make provision for the discharge of its obligations to its brave defenders. Said the late Senator Morton, in the course of his memorable speech in support of this bill:

"Mr. President—Justice to the soldier cannot always be deferred. It must and will triumph sometime. If it does not come this Congress it will come at some other Congress. It is a part of the war debt, as much so as the 5-20 bonds or the 10-40 bonds. It is founded on the same prin-

ciple of justice. It is an obligation resting upon this Nation, and if it takes \$20,000,000 or \$30,000,000 to make no difference. It is a debt this Nation honestly owes and ought to be paid. In other words, let the bounty be equalized; put all honorably-discharged soldiers upon the same basis; pay them at the same rate. They are entitled to it. The justice of it no man can dispute, and that is all that this bill contemplates. I am for it. I vote for it with all my heart."

May the spirit which animated Senator Morton in his eloquent advocacy of the principle involved in the Equalization of Bounties prompt our statesmen of the present day to redeem the Nation's honor.

## A Woman's Grievance.

In another column of THE TRIBUNE, under the head of "A Woman's Grievance," will be found a letter from one of our subscribers, in which exception is taken to the course of the Grand Army in excluding women from membership in the Order and participation in its assemblies and entertainments, and in a casual way deploring the general lack of appreciation of woman's work. The writer evidently speaks from personal experience, and her complaint is deserving of more than passing consideration. It certainly does not comport with THE TRIBUNE's idea of what is due the loyal women of the country, that any one of them should suffer from ingratitude or neglect, and so far as its influence may avail it will be exerted to repair that wrong. But we are far from believing that the indifference of which they complain is intentional. It is simply the result of thoughtlessness, as is shown by the fact that wherever the question of associating the gentler sex in the work of the Grand Army has been openly agitated, the value of woman's services has been recognized in the most substantial and emphatic manner. The rapid multiplication of ladies' relief societies, in connection with local Posts, is in itself conclusive evidence of the disposition of our Grand Army comrades to avail themselves of woman's help and sympathy; and if there are cases where as yet this disposition has not manifested itself, it must be remembered that the movement is still in its infancy. The time will come, we dare say, when no Post in the country will be without an auxiliary society of loyal and patriotic ladies.

Meanwhile, there can certainly be no objection to opening the doors of the Post room at least once a month to the wives and daughters of our veterans—to all patriotic and generous women, indeed—and permitting them to share in the social pleasures of the Order. Their presence will no more be out of place there than in the hospital, when it soled the sufferings of the sick and soothed the agonies of the dying, but will impart a bright and cheerful aspect to gatherings which otherwise might prove dull and lifeless. The truth is that woman's influence is just as potent for good now as it was in the darkest days of the rebellion, and our veterans cannot afford to slight it. The hands that kept the embers of love and affection blazing on the deserted hearthstone, and the hearts that remained steadfast in their devotion to the absent, ought not to be put away in these days of peace and plenty from the society of those to whose happiness they were consecrated.

## Neglected But Not Forgotten.

In another column will be found a sketch of the trial and execution of Commandant Wirz, of Andersonville. Although nearly twenty years have passed away since the miserable wretch expiated his crimes upon the gallows, time has not softened the resentment of his victims, and the recollection of his cruelties still embitters their existence. Nor could it well be otherwise. The survivors of Andersonville, looking back to the epoch of the war, unlike their comrades in arms, derive no pleasure from the contemplation of brilliant military achievements. Their pulses do not respond to the thrill of pride which other veterans feel when they recall their exploits on some bloody field. To them the past speaks only of privations endured to no purpose and sufferings imposed without reason. For those who braved the perils of the field there was compensation in the promotion that valor wins. After the battle there was glory to be shared; after the stormy night on picket rest; after the toilsome march, the cheering camp-fire. For the inmates of Andersonville there was neither reward nor consolation. Death, without hope of honor, leered at them from the sentry boxes; starvation, without hope of succor, haunted the stockade; disease, without hope of remedy, lurked in the very food they ate and the water they drank. To these unhappy men the days must have seemed like years, and months like ages. They lived—those who did live—a whole lifetime in a few brief weeks, and they suffered—there were none who did not—the utmost of mortal anguish in a single summer.

It is impossible, even at this late date, to read the story of their sufferings as it was told by a cloud of witnesses at the trial of their inquisitor, without experiencing a sensation of profound nausea. The details are too sickening, too revolting, to be reproduced in print. Yet the half has not yet been told of what our ex-prisoners endured while they were in the clutches of Wirz, and almost nothing is known of the tortures to which Union soldiers were subjected in less notorious prisons, such as Cahawba, Blackshire, Millen, Tyler, Florence, Salisbury, Columbia, Macon and Charleston. It is true that the treatment which Union soldiers received in rebel prisons was made the subject of a Congressional investigation shortly after the war and that a huge volume of testimony was collected, but how few have ever seen it—much less read it!

The time is coming, however, when the claims of those who suffered everything short of death for their country in the pestilential prisons of the South will command the at-

tention which they merit. Congress will yet find that the calm, dispassionate judgment of the country approves the demand that provision should be made for the care of these heroes of ours, and it will no longer dare to deny them justice.

## The Advance of the Grand Army.

The growth of the Grand Army of the Republic during the past eight months has surpassed all expectations. When the National Encampment met at Baltimore, in June last, the total membership of the Order, as shown by the report of Adjutant-General Olin, was, in round numbers, one hundred thousand. At the close of the second quarter of the administration year the returns of the several Departments disclosed a gain of fifty thousand, and the total increase up to date is probably not far from sixty thousand. Should this rate of growth be maintained during the six months that must yet elapse before the meeting of the next annual Encampment, the close of the fiscal year will find the Order two hundred thousand strong.

It may be said with truth that such a growth is almost without precedent in the history of secret organizations, but it does not follow that it is miraculous or unaccountable. The activity and vitality which at present characterize the Order are not the result of accident or the manifestation of some occult influence. On the contrary, they are attributable to the most familiar and prosaic of causes—the power of individual effort. It is to the persistent and well-directed labors of individual comrades, stimulated by the enthusiasm pervading the Order generally and the shining example set by the Commander-in-Chief, that the prosperity of the Grand Army is chiefly, if not wholly due, and it is upon the energy and zeal with which these labors are prosecuted hereafter that the future welfare will depend. New Posts do not spring up of their own accord, nor is it often that old Posts grow in membership by virtue simply of the force of attraction. The man as well as the opportunity must be at hand—some self-sacrificing, determined comrade—to personally direct the work of organizing and recruiting. It was not because of a lack of material that the Grand Army did not obtain its maximum strength years ago. Even at this late date there are more than a million ex-soldiers eligible for membership who are still without the ranks of the Order. The obstacle in the way of gathering all our veterans into the fold has been the scarcity of organizers and workers in the rank and file of the Grand Army—the absence of the true missionary spirit in the conduct of the Order itself. That such has been the case can be shown out of our own limited experience, even. What does the fact that we are daily receiving applications for Post charters from communities in every section of the country—including the oldest and most vigorous Departments—prove but the paucity of workers in the Grand Army itself—the lack of reapers to glean the fields that are already white unto the harvest? As the number of reapers multiply, in that proportion will the harvest increase, and another year may witness a still more remarkable growth in the membership of the Grand Army than has distinguished the present.

We have referred to the "shining example" of the Commander-in-Chief as one of the stimulating influences in the work of the year. It is in no mere complimentary sense that we employ the phrase. There is now lying before us a letter from Comrade Van Dervoort, in which he says:

"I have now visited all Departments east of the Mississippi River, and only California, Dakota, Iowa, Utah, Oregon, Washington Territory, and Kentucky still remain—7 to visit and 24 visited. I have traveled 29,983 miles; and if we can only gain 100,000, my soul will be glad."

This is a record which may well challenge the admiration, as it must certainly stir the enthusiasm of our comrades. No Commander-in-Chief has ever before made the influence of his position felt throughout the length and breadth of the country as Comrade Van Dervoort has done, or has displayed such personal devotion to the work of building up the Order. He has practically given up one entire year of his life to this labor of love, and set the mark of his ambition so high that no future Commander-in-Chief can afford to set a lower estimate upon the duties and responsibilities of the office.

And now, comrades—readers and subscribers all—let us do our share towards upholding the hands of so intrepid a leader. Let us plant a Post of the Grand Army in every hamlet from the Atlantic to the Pacific where the blue coat of the soldier is still the garb of patriotism. Gather the veterans in from the work-shop and the furrow and enroll them once more under the flag that protects in peace what was won in war. THE TRIBUNE will furnish the necessary blanks and instructions, and see to it that the new Posts are promptly mustered.

## Advice to Correspondents.

We are always glad to hear from our subscribers. Their letters frequently contain valuable suggestions and sometimes furnish important information. It is our custom to read them attentively, and so far as space will permit and the interest of the subject warrant, give them publicity in our columns. But it is a physical impossibility to publish them all. If we were to do that, THE TRIBUNE would contain nothing else but soldiers' letters—and we do not suppose that our subscribers would care to read two or three thousand letters every week, no matter how patriotic the sentiment which they contained. Necessarily, therefore, the editor is obliged to exercise his judgment as to what disposition to make of these letters; and if it sometimes happens that he errs in his selection, it should be remembered that after all he is but mortal.

And right here it may not be out of place to give our readers some practical hints and suggestions about letter-writing. In the

first place, write on one side of the paper only. That is a rule of long standing in all newspaper offices, and is rendered necessary by the fact that where a letter occupies both sides of the sheet but one compositor at a time can set type from it. In the next place, be sure to write capital names plainly and distinctly. That is the only certain way of guarding against provoking errors. In the third place, write briefly. If you have anything to say, say it in as few words as possible. There is a world of truth in the old proverb that "brevity is the soul of wit." In the fourth place, confine yourself to facts and incidents of which you have personal knowledge. Let history take care of itself.

We are always glad, as we have said, to hear from our subscribers, and if they will but profit by the foregoing suggestions, we shall be able to make better use of their letters. We cannot find room for all the original poetry, campaign histories, prison sketches, individual military records, and pension complaints that they may choose to send us, but short, graphic, and entertaining letters are pretty sure to find a corner in THE TRIBUNE.

## The Western Floods.

The press dispatches have doubtless recorded with substantial accuracy the extent of the devastation occasioned by the recent floods in western rivers, but we suppose no pen is capable of describing the individual distress which they have brought about. The mere statement that so many thousands of dollars worth of property have been destroyed in a certain town, conveys but a feeble idea of the actual sufferings of the victims. It was only the other day that the sympathy and generosity of Americans were invoked in aid of the homeless inhabitants of inundated Germany, and now, before the contributions for that purpose have stopped pouring in, there arises an occasion for charity here at home that is almost the exact counterpart of the first. Aside from the loss of life—which has been considerable—the floods along the Ohio have been attended with great personal privation and there are thousands of persons who will for some time to come be dependent upon public charity for food and shelter. It becomes every one, therefore, who has means and to spare, to contribute to the relief of these sufferers, and we trust that our own readers, scattered from Maine to California, will not be backward in sending, through the proper local channels, substantial aid to the distressed.

The Government, too, may with propriety extend in the shape of a Congressional appropriation some assistance to the victims of the floods. A calamity like this is beyond the power of States or municipalities to deal with, and providing proper safeguards are thrown about the expenditure of the money set apart for the purpose, the people will not begrudge such a use of the Treasury funds. And, indeed, it is not unlikely that Congress will be called upon to extend its generosity even further than is now contemplated. Although it is, perhaps, too soon to state with certainty the ultimate effect which the floods in the Ohio and tributary streams will have upon the volume of the Mississippi, there is grave reason for apprehending a repetition of the disastrous overflow of last season, when an area of country one hundred miles in width was submerged and thousands of persons rendered homeless and destitute. Should this apprehension be realized, the charity of the Nation would be heavily taxed to relieve the suffering that would ensue. Under any circumstances it is evident that the question of erecting a perfect levee system along the Mississippi is destined to assume a far greater importance in the public estimation than ever before.

## Our Mexican Veterans.

One of the incidental results of the prolonged discussion of the tariff and internal revenue bill during the present session of Congress is the failure of that body to take action on the bill granting pensions to the survivors of the Mexican and Indian wars. On the 16th of January last, Mr. Rice, of Missouri, reported from the House Committee on Pensions a resolution making the bill a special order for the first Tuesday in February, and from day to day thereafter until disposed of, provided only that it should not interfere with the consideration of appropriation or revenue bills, or prior special orders. The resolution was debated at length, but the discussion disclosed the fact that the sentiment of the House was favorable to the measure, and on a ye and nay vote being ordered, 157 Representatives were recorded in the affirmative, and but 62 in the negative.

When the first Tuesday in February arrived, however, it found the House still engaged in the consideration of the tariff bill, and the special order necessarily went over. It is possible, of course, that the measure may yet be called up for action, but at the present stage of the session there is no probability of such an event, and our veterans may as well resign themselves to another disappointment, and transfer their hopes from the Forty-seventh to the Forty-eighth Congress. Whether they will fare any better at its hands will depend to a great extent upon the course which they may see fit to pursue for the enforcement of their claims. It must be apparent to them by this time that their interests are identical with those of our ex-soldiers generally. It is the spirit of opposition that has recently been developed to pensions of all kinds, rather than any special hostility to their own claims, which has hindered the passage of the bill to provide for their support, and unless they make common cause with the survivors of the war of the rebellion in opposition to those who are raising this hue and cry against any enlargement of the pension roll, their chances of ultimate success will be very

slender indeed. The truth is that the question at issue is no longer the equity of any particular pension bill, but the soundness of the principle underlying all pension measures. The value of the services which were rendered by the soldiers of the Mexican war is not in dispute. The territorial acquisitions—comprising the four great States of Texas, California, Colorado, and Nevada, and the Territories of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, and aggregating in all 937,875 square miles—resulting from that struggle, will always furnish an unanswerable argument in support of their claims, and, as Senator Voorhees once said, "if a statue of the precious metals was erected to-day to each surviving veteran of the Mexican war, instead of the enactment of the law giving them \$8 a month for their lives and their widows after them, the expense would be but a barren pittance in comparison with what this Government has received as the proceeds of their privations and their valor." It is too late in the day for any Senator or Representative to oppose the pensioning of these men on the ground that they are not worthy of the Nation's care. The danger which menaces their interests has a very different origin. It proceeds, as we have said, from the concerted attack which the enemies of the soldier are making on the pension principle itself. They would have the country believe that the whole pension system is honeycombed with fraud and that any further extension of it will plunge the Government into bankruptcy. To combat this idea is evidently the most pressing duty of the hour, and if our Mexican veterans would thwart the efforts of their enemies to rob them of public esteem they should heartily unite with THE TRIBUNE in the great work of bringing the Nation to a true sense of its obligation to those who at any time have imperiled their lives in its defense.

## Rich Mountain.

The graphic description of the fight at Rich Mountain, related to the readers of THE TRIBUNE by General Rosecrans at our urgent request, will be read with especial interest by the survivors of the regiments who participated in that brief but decisive conflict.

The plans of victory over the successful termination of a campaign that cleared Western Virginia of Confederate troops had scarcely died away when the news of the defeat of the Union army at Bull Run startled the country, and convinced the Government of the herculean task it had undertaken in subduing the rebellion.

Original articles contributed by prominent actors in the great drama that followed will form one of the features of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, and every number will contain a chapter of war history either editorial or written expressly for its columns.

THE TRIBUNE is in daily receipt of letters from its subscribers asking for instructions concerning the steps necessary to be taken preliminary to the establishment of new Posts of the Grand Army, and for the information of those who may be engaged in the work we take pleasure in publishing the following general directions: First, secure the signatures of at least ten ex-soldiers or sailors to an application for a Post charter. Every ex-soldier or sailor who served in the Union army during the late war and received an honorable discharge is eligible to membership, and THE TRIBUNE will furnish a blank form of application on request. Second, as soon as the application has been properly signed—the minimum number of signers required, as we have said, is ten, but of course as many more should be obtained as possible—return it to this office, whence it will be forwarded at once to Adjutant-General Brown, and by him duly indorsed and transmitted to the Department authorities for action. The charter fee prescribed in the rules and regulations of the Grand Army is ten dollars, but the Post dues are fixed by the Post itself and do not as a rule exceed two dollars per year for each member. THE TRIBUNE will be happy to render any assistance in its power in this work.

"HAD I but served my God with half the zeal I served my King, He would not in mine age have left me naked to mine enemies," was the despairing cry of Wolsey. The ingratitude of Republics is proverbial. For thirty wearisome years the wounded survivors of the Continental army were permitted to drag out a miserable existence—a burden upon their relations, or paupers upon the bounty of individuals—before the Government extended a hand for their relief. Hundreds of them died cursing the hour when they became the victims of such base ingratitude. But there was reason for the neglect of Congress in caring for the veterans of the War of the Revolution—an empty Treasury. Now no such excuse is offered even by the most rabid enemy to the soldier. The revenues of the country are ample to enable the Government to fulfill every obligation to the soldier in the spirit as well as in the letter of the contract. The cry of "fraud," which in most cases is but an echo of the "rebel yell," is raised on account of the vast number of claims filed by our disabled comrades and by their dependent relatives. Of the 2,773,408 men who faced rebel bullets, too many of them seem to have been struck by the leaden missiles to please the sticklers for an economical adjustment of the Nation's debt.

THE recipients of sample copies of the present issue of THE TRIBUNE should endeavor to procure at least one new subscriber for every copy furnished. If every one of our readers will send us one new subscriber, the circulation of THE TRIBUNE will soon reach the desired one hundred thousand.